

BIBLE ELECTION

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JOHN MAVITY

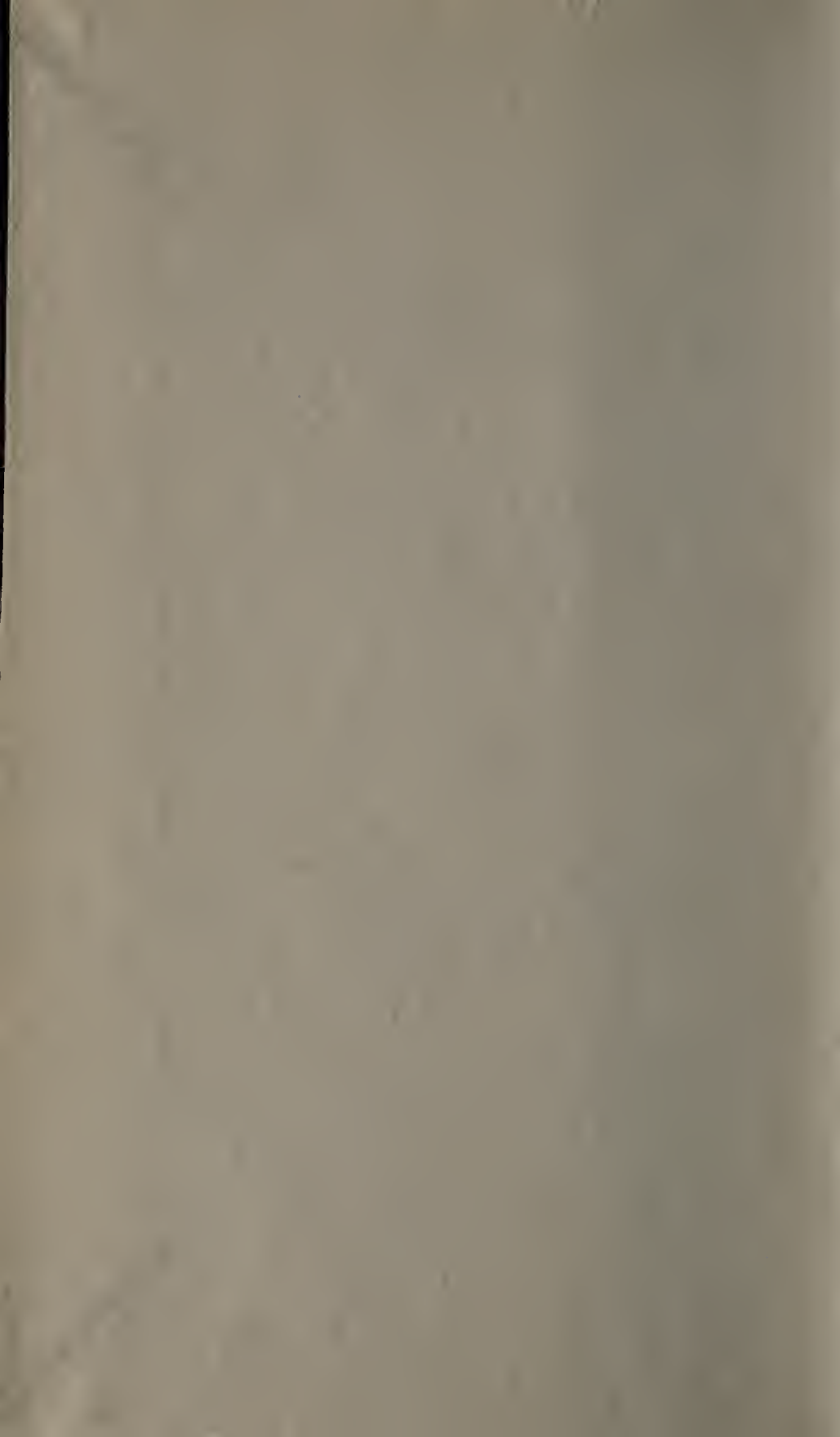


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# BIBLE ELECTION

=BY=

JOHN MAVITY,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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EDFORD, INDIANA:

EDFORD PRINTING AND PUBLISHING HOUSE,  
1875.



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M. A. GELWICK, PUBLISHER, BOSTON.



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## INTRODUCTION.

All Bible readers admit that Election is taught in the good book. As far back as we have a history of the dealings of the Almighty with men, we find that some men have stood before the Lord, in relation to others, as His chosen or elect. In the time of the great flood, Noah and his family were the Lord's favorites; at the time of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's family were the elect; and, during the law dispensation, Abraham's posterity were the elect family. And all admit, I presume, that the Lord has a chosen, or favored people under the gospel reign.

But, while all admit Election as being a Bible subject, we differ materially in judgment, as to the Lord's mode of selecting or choosing his people. Some hold that the Lord has made the selection unconditional, as respects the faith or conduct of those chosen, or rejected; while others hold that the Election is conditional, according to certain limitations by divine authority. The former hold

that man has no ability whatever to perform anything towards coming into the favor of God; while the latter hold man as responsible for his conduct, believing that the Lord requires nothing of him, more than he has ability to perform. It is evident that positions differing so widely from each other can not both be correct. Hence, the propriety of studying and impartially investigating, in order to get a proper understanding of the subject. This will seem the more necessary, when we consider that many souls have been kept from coming to Jesus on account of an erroneous view of the Lord's dealings with mankind. I frequently find old persons living out of duty, without God and without hope in the world, simply because they had been wrongly taught on this subject. Some have, under the dark misty soul-benumbing malaria of the wrong teaching, become so desponding as to lose the balance of their minds, so as to want to commit self-murder. And thousands are more or less injured in their efforts toward the performance of their duties in religion, in a dark, damp, heavy atmosphere of the dogmas and improper views of Election.

Such considerations, coupled with the request

some good brethren, that I should bring out a work on this subject, adapted to the common humble reader who is not able to possess himself with larger works, is my apology for writing this little book. It is not that I think I can do better on the subject of Election, than others have done; but, that I might reach some humble minds who are not favored with the more extensive works.

I wish to present to the common mind, as clearly as I can in so small a work, the proper or *Scriptural views of Election* and reprobation; showing who are elect, and who are not; how chosen, and how sustained as the Lord's elect; and also show the inconsistency of unconditional Election with justice, with reason, and with the divine teaching. And, in the sequel, to present the Bible plan of salvation so plainly that the humble seeker for salvation, with his Bible in hand, may learn just how to come to Jesus Christ. I have had my heart in the cause of truth for thirty-four years, and though I am quite limited in talent and attainments, my object is to do all I reasonably can for the Lord's cause and the general good of my fellow-beings. I hope, that in the providence of Jehovah, my present effort may awaken in some bewildered



souls an interest that will enable them to come to the truth as it is in Jesus. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—Rev. xxii 17. May we all come to a proper understanding, and particularly, a proper *practice* as to the will of God concerning us, is the prayer of your humble servant.

JOHN MAVITY.



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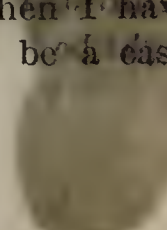
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## CHAPTER I.

### SPECIAL ELECTIONS.

THE Lord has, at different times for special purposes, made special personal Elections. These always had in view some special object for the general welfare, and not for the special benefit of the ones chosen. We might allude to Sampson as one such, and to Saul as another. Their Election and qualifications for the purpose in view, had nothing to do with their personal salvation or final destiny. Isaac was chosen and Ishmael rejected; Jacob was chosen, and Esau rejected; and the Jews were chosen, and all the rest of the world were rejected. But as regards the benefits in the purpose of those elections, the chosen ones had no advantage over those rejected. The purpose in view was to have a special people to take up the oracles of God, that the prophecies might be traced, the character of the true God manifested, and particularly that the Lord Jesus might be identified in due time the Saviour of the

world. To have a people in whose destinies there might stand an everlasting monument, testifying to the divinity of the Bible, and to Jesus Christ as the great moral and spiritual solar center of attraction for all that would come to salvation. The benefits of those special Elections are just as much for the rejected class as for the chosen. They effect nothing as to the justification of the elect persons, or the condemnation of those refused. A righteous Jew is no more approbated than a righteous Gentile; nor is a wicked Gentile any more, under wrath, than a wicked Jew. As to the great purpose in view, those elected and those passed by, stand upon an equality, having equal interests in the atonement of Christ.

Under the Christian Dispensation, the apostles are the special predestinated ambassadors of Jesus, to set before the people his authority and claims. For this purpose, they were specially endowed with all wisdom and prudence, and a knowledge of the will of God, that, walking blameless, they might be to the praise of the glory of God, and in due time gather together in Christ all the good into a harmonious fellowship.—Eph. i: 1-12. But this special Election did not entitle them to heaven. In spite of this Election, they might have been lost, had they failed in personal piety. Paul says, “But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-  


away."—1 Cor. ix: 27. And he attributes his title to the crown of glory, not to his having been thus chosen, but to his having *fought a good fight*, and *kept the faith*.—2 Tim. iv: 7. Neither did the special endowments of the Spirit bring him into a state of justification, for he says they are all nothing as to this end, unless he exercises love.—1 Cor. xiii: 1-2.

Indeed, to represent the Lord as esteeming one above another because of some *special* favor bestowed on him, is to attribute to the Almighty an unjust character. The Lord, in justice to his creatures, esteems each according to the manner in which he exercises and uses talents and gifts. He holds all as equal before Him, except as they differ in personal virtues.) All are concluded under sin, and all offered salvation on equal terms. (Hence; the Election of grace is *not personal* or special, but according to character actuated by proper motives through faith in Christ.

## CHAPTER II.

## WHO ARE THE ELECT?

We shall now undertake to identify, according to the Word of God, the *elect* of the Christian dispensation—not the special, but the general elect—to which all belong who are justified through the atonement of Christ.

1. *The believers* in Jesus Christ are the elect. “Whosoever believeth in him might have eternal life.”—Jno. iii: 15; vi: 47. They who receive the testimony concerning Jesus, as given by his apostles and corroborated by the prophecies and types of the old dispensation. Faith in Christ through this testimony is the faith included in the prayer of our Saviour: “I pray not for these alone, but for them also that believe on me *through their word*.”—Jno. xvii: 20. “These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and, believing, ye might have life in his name.”—Jno. xx: 31. “Therefore cometh forth faith by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”—Rom. x: 17. As to the extent of faith, it must influence the affections, so as to bring the desires, and



purposes of heart, and the life in harmony with the will of God. It must *purify the heart*, (Acts xv: 9) taking God at his word, and stepping at his command. Abraham is the proper example; he was always ready to go at the command of the Lord, even when he could see no propriety in it. He "went out not knowing whither he went."—Heb. xi: 8-17 and Rom. iv: 12-20. There is faith enough, only when the will is subdued and the soul brought into subjection to the divine will. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey," etc.—Rom. vi: 16.

2. *The humble and the prayerful* are elect. The great elect Head, in his Sermon on the Mount, blessed the humble poor in spirit, regretting sin, thirsting for righteousness, meek and pure in heart.—Math. v. Paul exhorted the Colossians to "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."—iii: 12-13. Again, Jesus says, "And shall not God avenge his own elect who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"—Luke xviii: 7. Hence, we find that the humble, contrite, meek, prayerful soul is of the elect of God.

3. *The obedient* are elect; they who hear and do

the sayings of Jesus, or the will of God.”—Mat. v: 21-24. “The *doers* of the work are justified.”—James i: 25. “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”—Rev. xxii: 14. Eternal life is for them “who by patient continuance in *well-doing* seek for glory and honor and immortality.”—Rom. ii: 7. “If ye *do* these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2 Pet. i: 10-11. “To *obey* is better than sacrifice.”—1 Sam. xv: 22.

4. *They who are led by the Spirit*, are elect. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”—Rom. viii: 14. “And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”—1 Jno. iii: 24. These declarations are plain and positive; and, were it not for the ambiguity caused by the superstitious mysticisms of blind teaching, there would be no difficulty in understanding them. But beholding one assuming to be led by the Spirit to preach Calvinism, another to preach Arminianism, another Adventism, another Mormonism, etc., etc.; and again, beholding the Spirit working so differently to ~~suit~~ different crowds, as in Quaker meetings, it ~~moves~~ but one to speak at a time, while in a Methodist meeting it moves, sometimes, twenty to speak ~~at~~ once, seeming to conform to the different notions



of worship in the world—I say, with all this before us, who could wonder that many should be bewildered in regard to spiritual influences? Who can believe that the Lord is the author of such confusion? Or is it uncharitable to believe that some may be mistaken in this matter? John says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false teachers are gone out into the world.”—1 Jno. iv: 1.

5. How shall we try the spirits? Not by our feelings and emotions of mind and conscience, for these always are according to what we believe, and the interest we have in the matter. We must not measure by ourselves, for Paul says of such, “They are not wise.”—2 Cor. x: 12. If a man believes he is right, or that he is justified in the sight of God, he will feel right and justified, whether it is true or not. While a man believes a stump to be a ghost, he experiences the same emotions that he would provided it was a ghost. Hence, emotions, being the result of circumstances, will not do as a proper test. We must look higher than ourselves for a true test.

6. John attributes the many spirits to the “many false prophets,” or teachers. This would indicate that we should try the spirit by the teaching. If the teaching be human, erroneous, or false, the spirit imbibed by receiving such teaching, is a human, erroneous, or false spirit. If the

teaching is divine, the spirit imbibed by receiving it is divine. Hence it is said, "The just shall live by faith;" again, "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."—Heb. x: 28; Gal. iii: 14. If through faith, it is according to testimony, for faith is always connected with testimony or teaching. It is also declared that He gives the Holy Spirit to all them that obey Him. We all admit that the Spirit which spake through the apostles was the true Spirit of God. *They* received it by direct endowment; *we*, through faith. Their communications being the teachings of the Spirit, when we, through faith in Christ, imbibe the spirit of this divine teaching—when we are brought in desires, purposes, motives and actions in conformity to this spirit, we have the spirit the Lord gives. If the spirit in us is to serve the living God and do whatever his authority requires of us, being obedient, humble, faithful, merciful, etc., being actuated in life by the will of God to the best of our understanding, we have in us, and are led by, the same spirit that endowed the apostles; the spirit of righteousness, of obedience, of love toward God and man. This is the Spirit of God, although we may not account for how we came by it.

7. When the Holy Spirit put forth his claims on the day of Pentecost, three thousand were led by him through the apostles, to become sons of God.—Acts ii. And they continued sons, for they con-

tinued to be led by the Spirit—"continued in the apostles' doctrine." Now, with all this before us, we conclude that the man who believes in Jesus, and is humble, contrite, pure in his motives, obedient to the Lord's requirements, having his desires, purposes of heart, and conduct in life according to the Spirit as revealed in the gospel, such a man shows, by the spirit that actuates him, that he is one of God's elect.

## CHAPTER III.

## WHO ARE NOT THE ELECT?

To identify more clearly the elect, we shall now consider the negative side and show who are not the elect of God.

1. *The unbeliever* is not of the Lord's elect. "He that believeth not shall be condemned;" "He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him;" "Without faith it is impossible to please God."—Mark xvi: 16; John iii: 36; Heb. xi: 6. As long as a man remains in unbelief, he has no part in this matter, but is under the wrath of the Almighty.

2. *The wicked man* or habitual sinner, is not elect. It is written, "He that committeth sin is of the devil;" "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil."—1 John iii: 8; 1 Pet. iii: 12. That the wicked are condemned, needs no argument among Bible readers.

3. *The disobedient* are not elect. It is written, "He that doeth not righteousness, is not of God."—1 John iii: 10. He that does not the sayings of Jesus, is represented as foolish.—Matt. vii: 26.

Not only the tree that bears evil fruit is to be cut down, but the one also that *does not bear* good fruit. Matt. iii: 10. A proud disobedient spirit is denounced everywhere in the Bible, irrespective of other qualifications. No man is elect while he refuses to serve the Lord. They who commit sin, and they who do not righteousness, the sinner and the unrighteous, the sinner and the ungodly, and he who walks in the wrong counsel, and he who stands in the way of sinners, are Bible couplets referring to two classes of condemned persons standing opposed to the Lord. The one as transgressing the laws, and the other as failing to submit to righteous requirements. The one as a committer of sin, the other as an omitter of righteousness. Though a man may not be outbreakingly wicked, if he is not in the service of Christ he is not owned by the Lord as his chosen.

4. *They who have not the Spirit of Christ* are not elect. It is written, "If a man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The Spirit of Christ includes submission to the divine will. "I come to do thy will, O God, as it is written in the volume of the book concerning me;" "Not my will, but thine be done." No one in disobedience need claim that he has the Spirit of Christ.

From the foregoing we remark, that as all unbelievers, all disobedient persons, and all destitute of the Christian Spirit, are not elect, but remaining under wrath, then the idea of being elect un-



conditionally, is as unscriptural as it is inconsistent with justice and reason.

Before closing this chapter we shall notice a few quibbles, aimed to be presented in the way of reasoning away the force of Christian obligations.

1. It is argued that it is too inconsistent with common sense reasoning, to suppose the eternal fate of a man should depend on belief in the simple fact, that *Jesus is divine*. What justice can there be in placing so much importance in so small a proposition?

We would answer, *faith* is the simplest and most important part of our nature. Without it we could never know any thing beyond our immediate observation, and consequently, very little more than the brute creation. Without faith in teachers and authors, we would never learn sciences, arts, history, or any thing to elevate us as superior to other animals. We could not be trained, warned, advised, instructed or improved in any way. Hence, faith is the foundation of all our best aspirations, our true elevation and happiness. Since faith is the source of all our blessings in other things, why not important in the *more* important enterprise, the religion of Christ, the salvation of the soul?

Now, we are on the earth capacitated to love, sympathise, fear, hope, etc., but these affections are all confined to, and controlled by earthly objects which will soon pass from us. Then, all our

interests and aspirations being gone from us, we shall be left miserable, everlastingly ruined. Christianity is an address to all our affections, designed to build us up in interests and aspirations, in regard to the unseen things which shall remain *beyond* the tomb. The love of God is manifested to effect our love in the proper direction; the sufferings of Jesus, to effect our sympathy; the consequences of sin, to effect our fears; and the exceedingly great and precious promises, to effect our hopes in the proper enterprise of happiness eternal. In these things the gospel is precisely adapted to us, in order to fit us for enjoyment in another state. But how could all this effect us without *faith*? What is the love of God, the sufferings of Christ, the hope of eternal wealth, honor, life, and all heaven to us, in elevating in us aspirations and qualifications for the heavenly state, without we believe? "He that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that dilligently seek him;" "He that believeth not shall be condemned," is entirely consistent with enlightened reason.

2. It is objected that, if this faith is so important, it should be so written in the rocks, trees, and all nature around, that no one could fail to believe.

We answer, that would be inconsistent with our nature as moral, intellectual, responsible beings. It would be to unman us by forcing us into it. Our moral nature can not enjoy a condition forced

upon us. Responsibility is necessary to moral happiness. Hence, it is necessary that we have volition, that we may choose and be happy. God has given more testimony in favor of the divinity of Jesus, than can be brought in favor of any other fact that is beyond our observation, so that we *can* believe, unless we shut out the testimony by perversity of disposition. But the objecter would say, perhaps, "I can believe such fact as, that Alexander the great once flourished, but there is not testimony sufficient to convince me that Christ is divine."

We answer, that is because you can believe the former without incurring any responsibility; but to believe the latter, involves you in responsibilities to Jesus Christ. The *heart* is involved in the latter faith, and hence, being perverse, keeps the mind from giving proper weight to the testimony. Any intelligent man *can believe* in Jesus, unless he is disposed to free himself from responsibility. This is the chief source of unbelief. Men often fail to believe certain facts, not because the testimony is wanting, but because of some perversity of will that keeps the testimony from having its proper bearing.

3. There is a philosophy running something like this, viz.: We admit that rectitude, volitive rectitude, is essential to a condition of happiness, but to think that the man who, from his own choice, is honest, kind, benevolent, etc., is not in rectitude,

*we* think very unreasonable. Attending to ceremonies, joining Church, etc., can not make a man any better in principle.

We answer, this would seem plausible enough, when contemplating man simply as a social being; but this being only *one part* of his nature, the conclusion drawn from it must be erroneous. For conclusions logically drawn from only a *part* of the promises, must necessarily be wrong, in the ratio of the importance of that part not considered. Man is also a *finite* being, limited and liable to make mistakes. He can not have a full comprehension of the infinite universe, so as to see all the casualties and eternal consequences of every particular course of conduct; therefore, unless he is under guidance of the infinite Alwise, he can not be in perfect rectitude, and hence, in a condition of perfect happiness. For, left to his own imperfect judgment, he will often fail in rectitude, and hence in happiness. Religion is designed to humble the soul to a full submission of will to the divine will; so that, when freed from dull morality, it can live in as perfect rectitude and happiness as though it was infinite itself. The positive ordinances are particularly adapted to man in order to this end. A man may be moral, and yet not reverence God and his authority, and hence not be prepared with that self denial and submissive spirit that qualifies for heaven. A society of such spirits could not be a perfectly happy society, for they are not prepared



for perfect harmony. As men are limited in different degrees, their failures will conflict with each other, so that there could not be a heaven of such spirits as are not humbled under divine authority. But religion prepares the spirits for harmony; for, although limited in different degrees, having the will to go at the diction of the infinite Ruler, they are in as perfect harmony as though *they* were infinite. And no one can give any proper reason why a responsible spirit can be prepared for harmony and happy society, unless so humbled, as to step at God's bidding in positive ordinances. Here is the philosophy of religion. The Bible requirements are all in harmony with enlightened reason. "He that doeth not righteousness is not of God."



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE NON-ELECT MAY BECOME ELECT.

Since the elect are justified persons in the sight of God, under his approbation, care and protection, entitled to all the blessings in store for the righteous, it is, for us poor fallen creatures, the *most desirable* relationship that could be imagined. Our eternal destiny is involved in it; therefore it should be our chief concern to be in this relationship; and, if we are not, to know if by any means we might become of this favored class. This chapter is intended to show that persons not elect have the privilege of becoming the chosen of the Lord.

1. *God is no respecter of persons.* From this plain Bible declaration we draw our first argument. If this is to be understood in any proper common-sense way, it follows that the Lord does not approve and bless one above another, without reference to a difference of character, for choosing one and rejecting another, with reference to an eternal destiny, without regard to character, is respecting persons. Hence, if God has chosen any by an eternal decree, without regard to character, he has,

in this way, chosen all mankind. If he has chosen some on condition of character, he has chosen all who fill such conditions; otherwise, there can be no common-sense meaning attached to the declaration, "God is not a respecter of persons." Now, we think it plain that he has, through Jesus Christ, presented stipulations of character for all; and hence calls all to come and accept salvation on the conditions which are sealed by the blood of Jesus. He says, "I will in no wise cast off any that come to God by me." Hence, if one may come, *all* may come.

2. *Jesus has made provision for all mankind.* He is represented as having tasted death for *every man* (Heb. ii: 9), as being a propitiation for the sins of the *whole world*.—1 Jno. ii: 2. This is also represented in type in the table of show-bread. There were twelve loaves of bread, answering to the twelve tribes, showing that all the dominion under Moses were remembered in the provisions in the tabernacle. So there are provisions in the Church for all the dominion of Jesus, the uttermost parts of the earth. It is true that none but priests were allowed to eat of the show-bread, which would indicate that none but Christians, the antetypes of priests, have a right to the blessings of Christ; yet, as all the Israelites were remembered in the provisions, so all the world are remembered in the provisions of Jesus, and may partake by becoming priests, Christians. Yea, "He is able to save to

the uttermost all them that come to God by him." But one may argue, if there are provisions for all, then all will assuredly be saved. There being provisions in the Constitution of the United States for the protection of all her citizens, does not say that no one may be punished, or may lose his life by the authority of said document. The laws protect all who obey them, and Christ has made provisions far all who will accept of them. "Whosoever will, may partake of the water of life freely."

3. *All are invited* to come to Jesus. "All ye ends of the earth;" "All ye that thirst, come ye to the waters;" "Preach the gospel to every creature," etc., etc. How inconsistent are such invitations, if the provisions do not embrace all! It is written that the wisdom of God is "without partiality and without hypocrisy." It would be both partial and hypocritical to invite all, when only a part are intended, are provided for. Some tell us, that the general call embraces all; but the *special effectual* call is intended for the elect only. What a deceptive character some are ready to attach to the divine Being! All good people would hate such deception in a man, and why slander God with such? The Lord invites all, because he is able and willing to save all who will come.

4. "*God will judge all the world in righteousness.*" Who could see any righteousness in condemning a man for refusing that which was not intended for him, or for not performing that which

was not in his power to perform? If Jesus has made no provision for some men, how inconsistent to condemn them for not believing in him as their Saviour! He is not their Saviour, if he did not provide for them, and to believe in him as such would be to believe a falsehood! Then to be condemned for unbelief is to be condemned for refusing to believe a falsehood! O, how unequal the legs of the lame sometimes become! Nay, the condemnation is, that salvation is offered, and men refuse; facilities are given and they will not occupy; life is put within their reach, and they stubbornly refuse it. "How oft would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not."

5. *Persons who were not elect, did become elect*, in the time of the apostles. Peter addresses his first letter to the elect who were once not his people. "Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."—1 Pet. ii: 10. And Paul, after having represented the Ephesians as having been walking in the spirit of wickedness, as children of wrath, aliens, without Christ, without hope, without God, said of them, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."—Eph. ii:



19, 20. As we are under the same dispensation, if non-elect became elect then, they may yet. We have the same gospel, the same Christ, the same human nature. There might be more arguments brought to bear on this point, but we deem these sufficient to establish it. Any one who will, may come. (All are equally accountable to God for the manner in which they treat his beloved Son. All shall stand or fall in judgment, according to their works.)

6. Now, we exhort all who would have salvation to make the kingdom of God and his righteousness the first matter of pursuit. You will soon pass away, leaving behind you all that pertains to this world; and, without an interest in the durable things, you will then be miserable. I am aware of the discouraging dogmas that are taught for truth. One, that if a man is to be saved, nothing can hinder his salvation; and if he is to be lost, he has no possible means of avoiding it. Another, that all will finally be saved, irrespective of his conduct. And another, that although the Lord has made it possible for all to come and be saved, no one can obey until the Lord, in some mystical way, enables him to come. Such dogmas are no benefit to a single soul. They act only as a poisonous malaria, to discourage and benumb the soul that otherwise might seek salvation. Who ever read in the Bible that a man should have salvation without seeking it? or that a man has not power to perform what



God requires of him? These doctrines which carry the sentiment, *you can't do anything*, are of the devil, and a great lever in his hands for mischief. Do not listen to Satan, but to the Lord, who tells you, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He also tells how to come: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to the soul."

## CHAPTER V.

## HOW TO BECOME ELECT?

The process of coming into the favor of God, is represented in the gospel by many figures; but it is also presented in plain language, without a figure. In order to get a clear understanding we must not mystify plain statements by undertaking to solve them by the figurative statements, but we should undertake to solve figures and parables by that which is plain. By an observance of this common sense rule, much of the mysticism on religion might be avoided, and many sinners who are now lingering in perplexities, might be walking in the service of the Lord. Every one should learn his duty to God from the apostles, the true ambassadors of Jesus; remembering that what they required of persons in their time, is now required of all persons in the same condition. What they bound, or what they loosed on earth, is ratified in heaven, and "there is no respect of persons with God."

1. As a commission must always be in plain language, we commence first with the apostolic com-

mission, and the way in which the apostles acted in presenting the conditions of salvation to sinners. As Matthew presents the commission, the people were to be taught the gospel, to be baptized, and then instructed in all their Christian duty.—Matt. xxviii: 12, 20. According to Mark, they were to be taught, to believe, and to be baptized.—Chap. xvi: 15, 16. And according to Luke, they were to be taught, and to repent in order to justification.—Chap. xxiv: 47. Summing up all these, we have the people to be taught, to believe, to repent, to be baptized, and then serve the Lord as heirs of salvation. Now, as they were to commence at Jerusalem, we go to the day of Pentecost, and find Peter teaching and commanding believers to repent and be baptized for the promised blessings, and all that obeyed were added as saved, and they continued in their Christian duties.—Acts ii. The duty of the creature in coming to the Lord according to these plain statements, is to hear and believe, repent, (that is to change his purpose of life,) and to be baptized—to come out in favor of Christ, be consecrated to his service. Hence, the apostles always demanded of the people according to their condition in relation to these stipulations. If a man had repented, they did not ask him to believe or to repent, but to be baptized, (Acts ix: 16; xxii: 16,) giving every man credit for all he had already accomplished. And none were considered by their teaching, as being within the promise, until they

had accomplished all of these conditions. Hence every figure used by them denoting this change, included all these conditions.

2. *The figure of a birth* is used in conformity to the fact, that, under the former dispensation, they were the chosen by a birth-right.—John iii. “Born of water and spirit,” (v: 5,) includes all the conditions above referred to. A little further he explains that it is accomplished by hearing “the sound of the Spirit,” (v: 8,) which is the word of God, the gospel. Still further he shows that it is accomplished by faith in Jesus, (v: 15,) and coming to the light, (v: 21,) coming out into life service; hence including the baptism. Hence, we are said to be begotten by the gospel, the word of truth, (1 Cor. iv: 15; James i: 18,) quickened by the spirit through the word, (John vi: 63,) and born of the word, the gospel.—1 Peter i: 23. “The gospel is the power of God unto salvation.”

3. *The figure of a conversion*, change or turning.—Acts iii: 19. This also includes the whole process; for the judgment and affections are changed by *faith*, the purpose of life by *repentance*, and the relation by *baptism*.

4. *The figure of a burial and resurrection*.—Rom. vi: Col. ii. In this we are represented as being dead to sin, crucified to the world, and as having arisen to a new life, as represented by our baptism, having “obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine.”—v: 17. Hence, includes the same process.

5. *An engrafting* is used, representing that we have partaken of the proper nature, and been set into the proper stalk, Jesus Christ; a *marriage* representing that we love God because he loved us, and have taken Christ as a husband, head, ruler and protector; and *putting on a garment* representing us as having been properly shaped to fit Jesus, and then putting him on as a garment to wear.—Gal. iii: 27. “As many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ.” All these include the same process as above stated.

6. *The figure of an election* or a choosing. “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth; where unto he called you by our gospel,” etc. “Eleet according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”—11 Thess. ii: 13, 14; 1 Peter i: 2. This election is spoken of as spiritual, in contrast with election by family relationship, as a spiritual birth is spoken of in contrast with a fleshy birth.—John iii. Now, we see, by considering the conditions in both these passages, that those persons became eleet by being “called” by the gospel, *believing* the truth, *sanctification* of spirit unto *obedience*, and cleansing of the blood of Christ. And hence, all the conditions are included that we have heretofore considered. They are *all* understood in all these figures. Because faith is not named in



some of them, doee not say that it is not included; nor does it follow that repentance is unnecessary, because it is not named in some of these figures; and the same might be said of baptism. These conditions are the stipulations sealed with the blood of Christ for the cleansing of the sinner, so that he who comes to Christ through these, has the seal of justification.

7. But it is objected that as they were chosen "from the beginning," and "according to the foreknowledge of God," they were chosen long before they were born, and consequently without conditions. But Paul says, they were chosen *through* belief, sanctification, etc., and hence they could not have been elect before they were called, before they believed, or before they were sanctified to the service of God. They could not have been elect *before* they passed through the means by which they were elected. Hence, if we understand the phrase "from the beginning," to mean the beginning of creation, we must suppose he refers to *character*, and not persons, for God does not respect persons. But he did ordain that righteousness and happiness should go together from the beginning of creation; but no being stands as a justified person only when he fills this elect character. But are we bound to receive "the beginning of creation" as the meaning? The same apostle uses this expression, meaning the commencement of his public career in life.—Acts xxvi:

5. And may he not in the Thessalonian letter mean the beginning of his preaching among them? Acts xxii:4. He refers at this time in his first letter of "*knowing*" their Election, as witnessing it, at present when they were chosen.—Ch. i:4; ii:13. However, if he means the beginning of time, we understand him as referring to the elect character, and those persons became elect when they filled this elect character. Every soul who, in proper submission of will to the Divine Will through faith in Christ, sincerely attends to those conditions of justification as given through the apostles, and is persevering in learning and doing his duty towards God and man, is elect, whether he was elected before time, or since. This manifests the proper spirit; the spirit which comes not from the world but from the Lord. As long as one is serving his Maker, actuated by such love towards God and his authority, he is elect. As to the phrase, "according to the foreknowledge of God," it simply means according to what God has before made known by his prophets. With God there is not really *for* nor *after* knowledge; all is present with Him. But he had made known before, that in due time a prophet, the seed of Abraham, should come, able to save all, both Jew and Gentile, that would come to God by him. And according to this they were elect; they had accepted Jesus according to this foreknowledge. This Election was not eternal for the foreknowledge went before it. Hence

these passages contain nothing contrary to what we have said. We are elect only when we are in Christ, the great elect "head over all things to the Church." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."—2 Cor. v: 17.

## CHAPTER VI.

## HOW TO RETAIN THE ELECT RELATIONSHIP.

The importance of this relationship demands our chief concern and energy of soul; in the first place, to be in this justified state; and in the second place, that we *retain* our position in it until we reach the final reward. It is not an Election to Congress or the Presidency, which would still leave us exposed to strife, slander, disease, death, and all other ills that flesh is heir to; but it is an Election to the General Assembly and Church of the first born, among an innumerable company of angels and spirits of just men made perfect, with Christ the blessed Mediator, and God the judge of all under the government Mount Zion, in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, (Heb. xii. 22,) where we shall finally rest from all toiling and strife, disease and death, mourning and tears; with peace and harmony, love and joy forever in the blessed society of all the good of all ages in God's vast universe, from the Jehovah himself to the humblest soul who trusted in Jesus the Christ. Hence it becomes us to be very anxious to retain our most glorious relationship as the elect of God. Th



design of this chapter is to show *how* to retain this precious position.

1. We must continue in our duties as servants of the Lord. The apostles were to teach and to baptize believers, and to "teach them to observe all things" necessary to enable them to grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus. And those who accepted the call, at the opening of the terms on the day of Pentecost, "continued in the apostles doctrine." And Peter exhorts Christians to "Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, goodliness; and to goodliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. \* \* \* Give diligence to make your calling and Election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 Pet. i. Paul says the Lord will render eternal life to them "who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality."—Rom. ii: 7. And he predicates his title to a crown of glory on the fact, that he had "fought a good fight," and had "kept the faith."—2 Tim. iv: 7. And he says again, "I keep my body under, and bring it in subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away."—1 Cor. ix: 27. And John to the



seven Churches, always represents the final salvation to them who hold out faithful to the end, to them who overcome. And, in closing his book, he says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

2. That we should continue faithful to the end in order to eternal life, seems to me to be one of the plainest things taught by the apostles. Their chief design in writing the many letters to the Churches seems to be to reprove, warn, correct, instruct and encourage the Christians, that they might prove faithful, and finally enter heaven. We forsake the world in coming to Jesus; but, being yet in the world, we have it to overcome. In order to do this, we must wage a continual warfare till death shall free us from the conflict.

3. Now, if we could finally be found in peace having our Election and hope of seeing the Lord *sure*, without continuing in the service of the Lord what sense can be made of such exhortations as these? viz: "Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace; be diligent to make your calling and Election sure; follow peace with all, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." If we could keep from failing of grace, from losing the right way, from fainting, or from falling from grace, without persevering in well-doing, what sense could any one make of such as the following? viz; "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the

grace of God; make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; let us not be weary in well-doing, for, in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not; let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief; Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."—Gal. v: 4. Again, such as this, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."—Heb. xii: 16. Now, Esau was born with a birthright to his father's estate, but sold it to Jacob for a single meal; so every true Christian has a birthright to an eternal estate, as a joint heir with Jesus who is heir of all things; but we are warned, that as Esau sold for a trifle, so may we. We may, for a few of the perishable things of time, sell our right to heaven. Peter in his second letter (Ch. ii,) refers to some who had been in the right way, and had forsaken it, (v: 15,) had "escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and afterwards were overcome and turned from the holy commandment.—vs. 19–21. They had been *purified*; but, according to the proverb, "The dog turned to his own vomit again; and, the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," (v. 22,) they had turned back to their pollutions again, and were reserved to everlasting punishment. In conformity to all we

have said, the apostle says, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them who fell severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off."—Rom. xi: 22.

4. But, notwithstanding such Bible teaching men can, in order to sustain some favorite dogma defy all those plain Scriptures, and condescend to the most petty quibbles to evade their force. There is a dogma often expressed in the words, "Once in grace, always in grace," which is perfectly empty as to any benefit whatever to a single soul, yet how tenaciously some seem to hold to it! There is nothing in it to encourage any one to be any more inclined to righteousness, or to seek salvation—not a single redeeming motive in it; yet it is so important with some, as to benumb all of their common sense; so as to cause them to ignore the importance of all those exhortations to faithfulness, referred to above. The language of our Saviour in regard to the stubborn Jews, will apply in a degree to all such persons. "For this people's heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."—Matt. xiii 15.

5. In conclusion, we say, that, in order to hold our Election sure for eternal life, we must be faith-

ful, obedient, persevering in righteousness. If thus we live we shall not fail of the promise. "He is faithful that promised." "If ye do these things ye shall never fall." Paul said in regard to those who are faithful to God, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. viii. Yea, no power in the universe can hinder God from saving eternally all them who continue faithful to Him.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE BLESSINGS FOR THE ELECT.

1. When we enter into this relationship, the chosen of God, all our past sins are forgiven, and we stand in the sight of God, as though we had never sinned." "I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered you; being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. In this relationship, we stand as dead and buried to the past, and as alive in the state of justification.

2. Our relationship, for such poor worms of the dust, is the most wonderfully dignified that could be imagined! We are represented as of the family of God—"Fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." We are adopted children of the great *I Am*, and are heirs of glory, being joint heirs with Jesus, who is heir of all things. "Behold what manner of love the Father hat



bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. \* \* Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Being of the family of God, we are in the same family with all of the heavenly angels, with all the redeemed, with all happy spirits, with all the general assembly of the happy beings in the vast universe of God. Who could imagine a more desirable and glorious relationship!

3. Notwithstanding this dignified relationship, we are yet in the flesh, feeble, erring creatures. But the Lord has provided for us. That no penalty should rest upon us, he has taken the law out of the way, and placed us under a dispensation of grace and mercy, where we have an advocate with the Father, who is just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—1 Jno. ii: 1. It is, however, while we are walking in the spirit of love toward God and man—while we are walking in the righteousness upon which the law and prophets were founded—while we are fulfilling the righteousness of the law (Rom. viii: 4) in proper desires, purposes of heart, and determination of will, that we stand justified. While we yield ourselves servants of righteousness, being willing to rectify our mistakes, and show a proper disapprobation of our wrongs. For, if we yield ourselves servants of sin, we are not within the promises.

—Rom. vi: 16. But, while we are faithful, our prayers are heard, and we are sustained. “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.” “Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commands and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petition desired of him.”—1 Jno. iii: 22; v: 14, 15. The prayers of the faithful ascend up to God as incense for mercy, protection and glory. But it is the prayers of *saints* that ascend so high.—Rev. viii: 3. We are called disciples, as learners; brethren, as being adopted into the same family; Christians, as followers of Christ, married to him, our head and protector; but we are *saints*, as being *sanctified*, and fully devoted to the service of God. The altar of incense in the tabernacle was nearly eleven inches higher than the ark of the covenant, reaching above the ark and mercy-seat up to the glory, shining around the mighty ones; the cherubim. This would indicate that the prayers of saints ascend up to Jesus and all of his atoning grace, mercy and protection, and to the divine glory in store for the redeemed. We pray for mercy, for protection, for heaven with all the heaven means; and, if faithful, our prayers reach up to all of these, and will finally land us in the

possession of them. What a precious boon for such erring creatures!

4. While our relationship as elect is so *high* and honorable, it does not deprive us of any real blessing of this life. We have a right to *use* this world, not abusing it; which, indeed, is the surest way to enjoy its blessings. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."—Matt. vi: 33; 1 Tim. iv: 8; Heb. xiii: 5; Ps. xxxvii: 25. Individually, we lose no real comfort of life by being religious; and, as communities, we enjoy the world much more; for religious communities are much more prosperous and happy. Prosperity, in the real enjoyments of this life in any community, is in the ratio of the godliness of said community.

5. We are engaged in a glorious work, in union with Christ and his apostles, which gives much more pleasure than all the fleeting enjoyments of ungodliness—a work of saving souls, of redeeming the world from under sin and misery. Man was designed to have dominion over the earth, and to subdue it (Gen. i: 28; Ps. viii: 5-8); but falling

under rebellion, he lost his power over his enemies. But Jesus has come to his rescue, to enable him, in course of time, to conquer his enemies.—Heb. ii: 6-8. He is to progress and conquer through Christ, until wars shall cease, righteousness prevail, meekness reign, and men “rejoice in their abundance of peace.” With Jesus and his ambassadors, we are the light and salt of the earth, the pillar of truth, the center of all good to the world. We are to work in our Master’s vineyard until the earth shall bloom and bring forth righteousness and peace; till malice and revenge shall be subdued, and all national difficulties be settled without war, the Lord’s people be united in one harmonious body of love, the nations of earth become kingdoms of Jesus the Christ, and every enemy of man be subdued. At the close of the contest, *death* shall also be destroyed. Although we may be gathered home before all these things are accomplished, yet we are blessed with the honor of being soldiers in this glorious contest; and it is a consoling thought that the influence of our work does not leave the world when we do. Though the apostles have been dead eighteen hundred years, their work is still progressing. So our works of righteousness, reflecting on the people of our generation, will continue to reflect from one to another, generation after generation, until that great day when we shall all be called before the Judge of all, bringing our sheaves with us. How blessed in that day, if



our influence shall be found in favor of truth and right; that the agitation we gave the waters while in the world still vibrated in favor of righteousness down to the end! Let us not cease to work for the Lord, for in due "time we shall reap, if we faint not."

6. The blessed *hope* set before us yields us consolation amidst the troubles of time. Without this hope, our cares, toils, disappointments and afflictions would overbalance all our pleasures. Particularly as we approach death, how sad our condition without this hope! Peter speaks of some under-chains of darkness till the great judgment. These chains are felt by the man without hope before he leaves the world. When he is failing and losing his interest in his former pleasures and pursuits, darkness comes over him, because he has nothing to lean upon—no hope to cheer him! Having no interest in any thing beyond the grave, these chains wind closer and closer, until finally, in death, the poor soul takes a "leap into darkness." Not so with him who is within the promises of God; so living that he can claim them his own; living in the spirit of truth, and enjoying its consolations. The harder his afflictions and the nearer the grave, the more precious this hope! If wearied with toiling, he hopes soon to rest from his labors; if pressed with poverty, he hopes soon to possess an eternal inheritance; if scarce of friends, he sees all the good beings of heaven sympathizing



with him; when troubled, eternal peace is just before him; and when death stares him in the face he sees eternal life and vigor just over the river! And hence his hope, as a steadfast anchor, enables him to encounter all the storms and waves, because it reaches "within the vail."

7. But if the hope is so precious, what will the possession be? "what will it be to be there?" in the eternal city of peace, away from all evil and evil-doers, diseases and death, mourning and tears, and every thing that might interrupt the joys of God's elect! Where we shall feast with Enoch, Elijah, Abraham, Moses, all good men and angels, all the righteous of all ages in the vast universe of God, from Himself to the humblest saint! To dwell in the glorious city whose light is God and the Lamb, with eternal life, peace, friends, wealth, glory, eternal *every thing* delightful, lovely, precious, desirable and praiseworthy! But who can estimate the eternal glories in store for the elect? Suffice it to say, *it is enough!* What more could we wish—what more could be offered? If such will not call up our interest, what could interest us? If motives so high, deep and vast are not sufficient to influence to righteousness, what moral influences could effect the heart? No wonder the Saviour says, "What more could I do for my vineyard than I have done?" "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and with-

out price." "And the spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say come. Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## CALVINISTIC ELECTION—NO. 1.

We have treated our subject according to the Bible teaching with but few allusions to conflicting doctrines, but now wish to pay some respect to Calvinistic Election. This doctrine represents God as choosing his people *unconditionally*, as regards faith or conduct in the creature. That some are foreordained to eternal life, provided for, and finally saved; while others are foreordained to wrath, no provisions for their salvation, but they are doomed to eternal perdition; and all this irrespective of any condition of character in the creatures. But, that you may have it in their own language, we give a few extracts from the Presbyterian confession of faith.

On God's eternal decrees, they say, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto eternal life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and

definite that it can not be either increased or diminished.”—Nos. iii: and iv.

In speaking of those elect as being chosen in Christ, they say, “Without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto.”—No. v. After speaking of the means foreordained for the salvation of the elect, they say, “The rest of mankind God was pleased \* \* \* to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.”—No. vii. On the subject of the “effectual calling,” they say, “Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore can not be saved,” etc.—No. iv.

Now, what we particularly object to in the foregoing, is the position that this election and reprobation is special as to persons, *irrespective of any condition on the part of the creature*. This we deem unreasonable, unjust, unscriptural, and hence, *false*; all of which we hope to demonstrate in the investigation.

1. This doctrine throws all responsibility upon God. If a man is not saved, the fault is not his, but it is that God did not see cause to elect him and provide for his salvation. If it is argued that every man merits damnation on account of his

sins, we answer not so, according to *this* doctrine. *It* presumes man as coming forth polluted, entirely helpless within himself towards coming to righteousness, and perishing because the Lord fails to provide for him. The man had no hand in bringing himself into the world, and is not to blame for his being; and if salvation is unconditional, the whole blame falls upon his Maker, if he is not saved.

2. This doctrine nullifies and stultifies every motive and incentive for seeking salvation or serving the Lord. If salvation is unconditional on the part of the sinner, it is foolishness for him to make any effort in that direction. Hence, we find persons under the influence of this soul-benumbing dogma, remaining out of Christ till death tumbles them into the unseen. What a smile has been on the face of Satan ever since intelligent, pious persons imbibed his poisonous malaria "*you can not do any thing!*" This will discourage effort in any enterprise, and no wonder that so many are kept from the service of Jesus Christ under its influence. Who ever heard one of the inspired men of God telling that the sinner had not ability to obey the Lord—had not ability to come and accept of salvation! The condemnation is that "*ye would not,*" and not that ye could not.

3. This doctrine attributes to the Lord a character of partiality and deception. If it is not partiality to select some in order to bless, and others to



curse, without regard to difference of character, there can be no commonsense meaning attached to the word. And if it is not deception to send a Saviour as tasting "death for every man," as a propitiation "for the sins of the whole world," ordering the gospel sent "to every creature," calling, "come, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved," when there was only a *part* provided for—I say, if such is not deception, the term has no proper meaning. Such hypocrisy in a man would be hated by all good men, yet this doctrine slanders God with just such hateful character.

4. This doctrine renders the gospel and all gospel preaching a mere redundancy—entirely a useless appendage. It is written, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation," and that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save men." But if the Lord, by a decree irrespective of faith, etc., constituted some his elect to bless, and others his rejected to curse, why preach the gospel to them? Why use means, if the salvation is unconditional? This doctrine does not represent God as devising in wisdom a gospel adapted to man, but as devising a gospel so clumsy, as regards any utility, that the Lord has to, in some mystical way, make the man over again, to adapt him to the gospel.

5. This doctrine renders the condemnation of the wicked entirely unjust. The man is condemned for refusing Jesus, when there was no possible

chance for him; because the Lord did not elect, did not provide for him, and did not renew his soul. He is condemned for what he could not by any means avoid. If a man should tie a boy to a post, and order him to go out to plowing, and then turn into beating him for his disobedience, we would all say of him, "He is a very mean and wicked man." The doctrine under consideration slanders God with just such character in punishing the wicked. Not only so, but he is condemned for refusing a falsehood, for if there was no salvation in Jesus for him, to have believed in and received Jesus as his Saviour, would be to have believed and received a lie. How absurd! The sinner stands condemned for refusing a lie!

6. We had summed up other arguments on this point, but we will not cumber our work with them, since we think the foregoing are sufficient to prove our point, viz: That the doctrine of unconditional Election and reprobation is unreasonable and unjust. We will close this chapter with a consideration of a few arguments that might be brought against us.

1. The objecter argues, "If salvation is of *grace*, it necessarily must be unconditional." This argument is a sophism, for if I tell my poor neighbor that I will give him a sack of wheat if he will come to me for it, the fact of his having to come for it, does not exclude the idea of its being a gift on my part; and further, the apostle says,

“By grace are ye saved, through faith.” Not by grace unconditionally, but through the condition of *faith*, and as “faith without works is dead,” the condition of faith includes other conditions also.

2. It is argued again: “As God foreknew all things, he must have decreed all things.” Even if we admit the conclusion logical, it does not follow that the decree is unconditional. Why could not the Lord decree with reference to the character foreseen? But we will not admit the conclusion a legitimate inference from the premises. Knowledge and decree are quite different things. To admit foreknowledge and decree to be the same, would represent the Lord as often coming in contact with himself. God foreknew that Adam would eat of the forbidden tree, that men would lie, steal, commit murder, etc., and hence, according to this hypothesis, he decreed that they should do these things, and yet he forbade all these things. This brings his decrees and laws in contact.

3. Decree and foreknowledge are not equivalent. If I make a machine, knowing at the same time that, according to the casualties of nature, it will get out of order, does not prove that I decreed that it should get out of order. I once put out 30,000 apple grafts, expecting in time, after all the losses by rabbits, mice, grubs, etc., to have 20,000 trees for the market. My expecting a loss does not argue that I *willed* and decreed it. But

one might ask, "If you were perfect in foreknowledge, so as to have known precisely the trees that would be spoiled, would you have planted them?" Yes, I would; for according to established laws, if that 500 had not been planted, as many others would have been exposed to the same casualties. I did not will nor decree the loss, but planted expecting to make it pay, notwithstanding the loss. But again it might be said, "As God has power to have all things according to his will, he would not suffer any loss, only what he would will and decree." There is as much sophistry as good argument in this. I keep chickens, hogs, etc., on my farm, notwithstanding they are a trouble and expense to me. I have power to keep them off of my farm, but I rather have them with all this trouble and expense than do without them. I do not will the trouble and expenses, but simply *suffer* these, *willing* the benefits.

4. The infinite Jehovah, in establishing his vast universe, saw cause for establishing certain laws of order for governing his vast dominions. His laws are the best that could be devised, in order to bring the greatest amount of good to his creatures, in consideration of *all* of them for time and eternity. Material nature, having no volition to resist, continues in her original harmony in obedience to established laws. The planets, for instance, continue in perfect harmony under the simple laws of gravity and inert motion. Yet a thing designed



for a special purpose, sometimes infringes, in a degree upon another purpose. The sunshine, so useful and indispensable, sometimes may parch some tender plants. The fire, so beneficial to man, may sometimes consume a dwelling, but to answer the purpose of fire, it must have the nature of fire. Shall we say that God *decreed* the mischief that might follow when he made these things, or shall we not rather say he decreed the *benefits* in these things, permitting the evils for the sake of the good?

5. In order that man, as an intellectual responsible being, might be capable of happiness, the Lord made him capable of acting from choice. He could not be happy in a condition to which he is forced; he could not be happy in the conscienciousness of having performed his duty, unless he knew that he could have done otherwise. Neither could he suffer remorse for wrong-doing, unless he knew that he could have avoided it. Hence, consistent with man's nature, he must be influenced by motive power, instead of physical force. In the abuse of his volition, he has gotten out of order, but he can be effected through love, fear, sympathy, hope, etc. Hence the gospel is adapted in its motives to his nature in all these directions. The love of God manifested in Jesus, is addressed to his capacity to love; the suffering of Christ, to his capacity to sympathise; the doom of the wicked, to his capacity to fear; and the eternally great and precious



promises, to effect his capacity to hope. The Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the gospel, presents motives to call all those affections into exercise. These motives effect him through faith, hence faith is a chief condition of salvation. We must hear, learn, believe and obey, to stand within the promises. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city."

## CHAPTER IX.

## CALVINISTIC ELECTION—NO. 2.

Calvinistic Election is without any proper foundation in the word of God; and whatever passages are quoted to favor it, are misapplied when thus used. *Unconditional* Election and reprobation with reference to the eternal destiny of mankind, is a speculation wholly unauthorized. To demonstrate this, we will examine the passages relied on to prove the doctrine.

1. Such passages as, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; The Lord knoweth them that are his; I know whom I have chosen; No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father," are quoted in proof of this doctrine. But, as they do not state that conditions are not implied, they prove nothing for or against, although conditions are not named.

2. Other Scriptures are used as in favor of the doctrine, the context of which, show conditions. As, "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him."—John vi: 44. The

next verse shows the conditions. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Here, we see, they are to be drawn by *teaching*, and to come by *hearing* and *learning*. Nor is it in some mystical way, that they are to be taught; for the next verse shows that the teaching is not direct from the Father, but through the Son; and the next (47) shows that it is not direct from the Son, but through them that testify of him; for it is to come through *faith*.

3. "He hath chosen you from the beginning," (2 Thess. ii: 13,) is one of their proof texts. But, as the next verses show the conditions to be, calling by the gospel, and believing the truth, etc., the passage is misapplied, when used to favor unconditional Election.

4. Ezek. xxxvi: 26, 27, is often quoted in proof. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," etc. This Scripture is misapplied; for first, it is not said, that he will do this unconditionally; and secondly, the same prophet, in the same book, speaking to the same people, plainly sets forth the conditions in these words: "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O

house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.”—Ezek. xviii: 30-32. How inconsistent to quote from this prophet to establish unconditionality!

5. 2 Tim. i: 9, “Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.” Although it is not according to *our* works, there is nothing here to show that it is without conditions. It was “according to his purpose and grace;” and all the conditions in this purpose, are implied. This purpose is to save through Jesus Christ; and the conditions, whatever is necessary to bring us to Jesus.

6. John xvii: 6-11.—“Them which thou hast given me.” Of these there was one *lost*, (verse 12,) and also, all that should believe on Jesus through their word, were *added*.—verse 20. But the Calvinistic elect can neither be increased nor diminished. Hence, it is plain that this is misapplied.

7. Eph. i: 4-11, is held as favoring Calvinism. But you will notice that all the Ephesian Christians were *added* to those predestinated ones here spoken of; (verse 13), and hence it is misapplied, when used in proof of their elect; because their elect can not be increased. Those who first trusted in Christ, his true ambassadors, were predestinated, endowed with all prudence and wisdom, and a knowledge of the mystery of his will, that they might properly fill their office. But all that came

to Jesus through their ministry, were added to them as saved, or elected.

8. Acts xiii: 48.—“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” As this stands in our common version, the word *ordain* would seem to refer to the act of God, and hence correspond with the Calvinistic view. But scholars tell us that this word, as it occurs in the original, can not properly apply to the act of God, but to the act of the creature. Hence the meaning is something like *determined*, *disposed* or *predisposed*. At least it must apply to the mind of the creature, instead of the mind of God. And this will better agree with the context.

9. Rom. viii: 29, 30, is claimed as containing the body of Calvinistic Election. “For whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

10. Now, the apostles does not say that this predestination was unconditional as to “faith or good works on the part of the elect. The preceding verse would indicate the character elected. “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called ac-



according to his purpose.” This would show that one condition was that they *love God*. They had such love toward God, as to obey him. “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me,” said the Saviour. Another condition, they were the called according to God’s purpose. This purpose was to save through Jesus Christ: “In thy seed (meaning Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be saved.” Hence, they were in obedience to Christ, according to God’s purpose to save in him.

11. Now, if we admit that all of the finally saved were chosen from the beginning of creation, we hold that it was upon the condition of character foreseen; for God does not respect persons, and therefore, does not elect without reference to conduct. God has an elect character in order to happiness; and *persons* are elect, only as they fill such character. Those referred to, filled this character, loving and serving God.

12. We now present another view of this passage. The apostle had just asserted, that “all things work together for good to them who love God,” etc., and seems to use this language in proof of the assertion. He uses the past tense; not that the Lord *will* justify and glorify them in his own time; but they were already justified and glorified. Hence, he spoke of persons already glorified, who had lived and died before he wrote this letter. The word *know* is frequently used in the Bible in the

sense of acknowledge or approve; as we have in the phrase, "Ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you," that is, he never *approved* them. Hence, those he forenew, are those he before approved. His justification of them he formerly approved, is assurance that he will justify them he *now* approves, those who are living in Christ.

13. We will instance one, he foreknew. When he was about to destroy the world by water, he approved Noah, because he was humble, submissive, righteous, in the moral image of his Son; and hence, called him to a certain work, justified him in spite of the gain-saying world, and glorified him. To say nothing of heaven, his name was handed down to all succeeding generations in honor and glory, as one that pleased God, and is entitled to heaven. Such remarks will apply to all the true prophets. In view of this, the apostle asks, "What shall we say to these things?" then answers, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Since he glorified them he foreknew, he will glorify them he now knows, all true Christians, all who are according to his purpose, serving Jesus. At least, we do not find unconditional Election here. It is not said that this predestination is personal, irrespective of character.

14. Rom. viii: 38, 39.—"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels," etc., "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This is one of their

proof texts in favor of what they term *final perseverance*, or, as often expressed, “once in grace always in grace.” If a man is in possession divine favor, he is one of the elect, and is certain of the final salvation, which, with them, is unconditional. Now, if it could be shown that the apostle was here speaking as to whether one once under the favor of God could ever forfeit such favor, there might then be some semblance of argument in their using this Scripture, but it happens that the apostle is on quite another subject, *i. e.*, *the faithfulness of God* toward those who are faithful to Him—those who love him and serve his Son.—v. 28. Nothing in the universe can hinder God from blessing the faithful with all he has promised. “If ye do these things, *ye shall never fall.*”

15. In this same letter the apostle *does* get on the subject as to whether one can stand in the grace of God in disobedience.—Chapter xi: 19–23. He here shows the Gentiles that they stand in the favor of God on account of their faith in Christ, therefore if they should become unfaithful, they would be rejected; and that the Jews are rejected on account of unbelief, and hence, if they should become faithful, they shall be accepted again. “Behold the goodness and severity of God; on them who fell, severity; but toward thee goodness,

if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." The man who can not see conditionality taught here, is beyond the reach of argument.

## CHAPTER X.

## CALVINISTIC ELECTION—NO. 3.

We wish now to notice the chief passages in the 9th chapter of Romans, which are relied on to prove Calvinistic Election. Peter said of Paul's writings: "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."—2 Pet. iii: 16. Oh, how many souls have been kept from seeking the Lord, or from making any effort to come to Jesus, that they might be saved, by so *wresting* those Scriptures as to make them prove that salvation is unconditional—that the creature *can not do anything* toward being saved! Stultified by this soul-numbing dogma, they remain in disobedience, exposed to everlasting destruction!

1. We commence with verses 6-9: "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. . . . They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed," etc. In the commencement of this chapter the apostle expresses great concern in view of the lost condition of the



Jews; and, presuming that they would argue that, as they were the seed of Abraham, the promise of God has *failed*, if they are lost, he uses the language above quoted in answer. He here shows that Agar's son Ishmael, though a child of the flesh, was rejected; and yet did not invalidate the promise, as the promise was in Sarah's son Isaac. Hence you Jews, though children of the flesh of Abraham, being cast out, does not invalidate the promise in Christ. "He saith not, as to seeds, as many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ."—Gal. iii: 16. The promise being in Christ, you Jews are not heirs of the promise, while you refuse Jesus, any more than was Agar's son. From this it is plain that the condition of salvation is, that we accept of Jesus Christ.

2. Verses 10–13: "And not only this, but when Rebecca had conceived by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to Election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth), it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This is used triumphantly by Calvinists as a complete settlement of the question. They tell us that we can not dodge the fact that here is an Election without reference to character. We admit this to be a special Election for a special purpose, but deny that the apostle introduces it here to show that

Christians are chosen, irrespective of conduct. He introduces it to show the Jews that God's purpose can not be frustrated either by long established customs or the good works of which they might boast. Although it had been the custom under the sanction of the Lord, to give the inheritance to the eldest son, such custom did not hinder the Lord from giving it to the younger, when this was his purpose. So also the old custom of showing special favor to the Jews, will not hinder the Lord from saving only through Christ, since this is his purpose. All former customs must give way to the reign of Christ. Neither can the good works in keeping the ordinances of the law, effect any thing now, since the purpose of God is to save only through Jesus Christ by the gospel. All must come to *Him*.

3. By reference to Gen. xxv: 23, you will see that what the Lord said to Rebecca, before the children were born referred to the two peoples that should spring from her two sons, and not to the boys individually. And this sentence, "Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated," was not said to Rebecca, but by Malachi (i: 1, 2) some twelve or fifteen hundred years afterward. This hatred toward Esau was not irrespective of character. By reference to Amos (i: 11) and Obadiah, you will find why Esau, or Edom, was hated and punished. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off

forever. . . . As thou hast done, (to Israel) it shall be done to thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head." After these prophecies were fulfilled, we find in the last book of the Old Testament (Mal.) these words: "I loved Jacob and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." Hence, this punishment or hatred was not unconditional. The apostle seems to quote this language to show the fulfillment of what was said to Rebecca, that the people of the younger should have the preference, and not the cruel idea that God hated one and loved the other child before they were born.

4. "Is there unrighteousness with God?"—v. 14. If this preference was made, sealing the *eternal* destiny of the two without regard to conduct, it would be unjust. But it was for a special purpose, and did not decide the eternal destiny of the two boys.—See chapter on Special Elections.

5. "I will have mercy on whom I will."—v. 15. He does not say that he will have mercy without regard to faith or conduct. Many Scriptures may be quoted to show upon what character the Lord will have mercy. We will introduce one which embodies the chief conditions upon which the Lord will bless. "Let the wicked *forsake his way*, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him RETURN UNTO THE LORD, and he will have mercy

upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”—Isaiah lv : 7.

6. “Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”—v : 16. Old Isaac’s willing it to the elder according to custom, and Esau’s eagerly running for it, did not effect any thing against the purpose of God to give it to Jacob. So all the willing, running and working of the Jews under the law can effect nothing now against the purpose of God, to save through Christ; all must come under Jesus Christ for salvation, or be eternally lost.

7. “For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”—v : 17. This phrase *raised up* means, in this place, *aroused*, or *excited*; and so far as there was any special hand of God in this hardening, it was after Pharaoh had fitted himself for destruction by his stubborn rebellion, persisted in, that the Lord thus took him in hand, as a tool for accomplishing the end referred to. By reference to verse 22d, you will see that Pharaoh was already fitted for destruction when the Lord was bearing with him in so many conspicuous miracles. “Endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” In the history of Pharaoh, as recorded in Exodus, he is sometimes spoken of as hardening his own heart, and sometimes as being



hardened by the Lord. In chapters viii: 15-32 and ix: 34, it is his own act, but the Lord's in chapters x: 20-27 and xi: 10; hence, it was not unconditional on the part of Pharaoh. By his stubborn self-will and cruelty, he fitted himself for destruction, but the Lord did not destroy him immediately, because he saw that by performing the more miracles before this popular emperor, and so *arousing* him as to lead him into the Red Sea, he could there make an exhibition of him that would benefit the world. If a man fits himself for destruction by committing a first-degree murder, and the authorities see cause to put off his hanging awhile, to give an exhibition for the general good of community, we would not say that this is wrong, because the man was already fitted to this end—it does not make his doom any worse.

8. “Whom he will, he hardeneth.”—v: 18. If we wish to know whom he will harden, we should not mystify the matter by trying to solve it altogether by an ambiguous passage; but we should solve all ambiguous language by that which is plain; so we will go to a plain case in this Roman letter (chapter i: 21, 22, 26): “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. . . . For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections.” Here we have the condition plainly stated. When they knew God they did not



glorify him; "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge."—v: 28. There are now, living among us, just such hardened persons. But another case. Paul, in speaking of the great apostasy, says: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie," etc. The *truth*, that Jesus is the head over all to the church, and that the apostles are his proper ambassadors to set this authority before the people, they did *not* love. But the *lie*, that the *church* has the authority, and that *her* edicts by her counsels is paramount authority, they *loved*. And for this *cause* they were deluded, so as to bring on all the abominations of the dark ages, and so expose this lie that in the course of time all might learn to come to Jesus, the true foundation. We might bring up other cases, but these are sufficient to show that the hardening is not unconditional.

9. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?"—v: 21. The phrase *of the same lump* discards the idea of Calvinistic Election; for, according to the doctrine, we would have two lumps; an elect, and a reprobate lump. This doctrine places the whole human family in two distinct classes from all eternity, and all the elect, of course, must come from the elect lump, and all the rest from the other lump. But here is but *one*

lump, showing that they all stand upon an equality before the Lord until a change in character makes a difference.

10. It is claimed that, as the potter makes either honorable or dishonorable vessels without regard to difference in the clay, so the Lord chooses without reference to conduct. But this is very wide from the truth, as regards the case under consideration. The potter made the vessel according to the condition of the clay, as you may see by reading the case in the prophecy of Jeremiah (chapter xviii: 1-10.) Read this Scripture carefully, and you will see that the vessel was according to the state of the clay. When the clay so marred that it was not fit for the vessel he was making, he made another vessel of it; one for which the clay was suited. The Lord then told the prophet that he would deal with Israel as the potter did with the clay. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and pull down, and destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Hence, we see that if the nation change in character, he will make them a vessel according to that change. This is verified in the case of Ninevah. When they repented at the preaching of Jonah, the Lord did not bring upon them the threatened calamity. Again: "At what instance I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and

to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." As the potter changed the vessel when the clay marred, so when the nation changes in character, the Lord will make them a vessel according to such change. The apostle refers to this figure to apply it to the case of the Jews. The Lord has had them on the wheels as a vessel of mercy, but in rejecting the Lord Jesus, they had marred in his hands, and therefore he will make them a vessel of wrath. The same principle applies to individuals. The apostle said to Timothy, "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."—2 Tim. ii: 21. Hence, when this potter-and-clay comparison is solved according to Bible teaching, it is very strong in favor of conditional salvation. The Lord will either bless or curse, according to the conduct of the creature. If a man is not saved, it is not the fault of God, but entirely his own fault. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life," said the Saviour. "How oft would I have gathered you, as a

hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

## CHAPTER XI.

## CONCLUSION.

1. We now close our treatise on the subject of Election. We have tried to show the inconsistency of unconditional personal Election, both with reason and revelation; showing that God does not deal so unjustly with his creatures, as to seal their fate without regard to their conduct. He deals with man as responsible for his conduct; not loving and saving one on account of some special favor bestowed; and hating and condemning another on account of special grace withheld; but blessing and cursing according to the manner of occupying facilities and graces. It would be very partial and unjust in me, to love one son because he has a farm that I gave him, and hate another because he *has not* a farm that I withheld from him! And is it not sacrilegiously wicked to attribute such partiality and unjustness to the Lord of life?

2. We have shown who are, and who are not elect according to the Scriptures, that every man who reads may know, by an examination of himself, on which side he stands. And we say to every man, if you fill this elect character, so that,



through faith in Jesus, you are honestly and sincerely walking in the statutes of the Lord; in desire and purpose of heart, disapprobating what the Lord condemns, and loving and cherishing what He loves and recommends; we say if you are actuated by such spirit to the performance of your duty, both to your God and your fellow-men, you are the Lord's chosen; whether you were, or were not elected from all eternity. "We know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he has given us." This spirit of submission of will to the divine will, is of God; whether you do, or do not understand just how he gives it. If you are actuated by such spirit, you are "led by the spirit of God," and hence you are a son of God.

3. But, if you are actuated by a spirit of unbelief and disobedience—a spirit of disregard for the divine will and authority, and the divine institutions, you are *non-elect*. The divine promises and the divine grace are not yours. But we have shown, we think, that such lost persons, the non-elect, *may become* to be of God's elect. Jesus came to save that which was lost; and *not* that which *was* elect and safe from all eternity. He has prepared the way, and devised the means for saving all such lost creatures, as will come and yield to the terms He has sealed with his precious blood. Therefore be encouraged to use those means which Jesus has consecrated to this end. You must *seek* salvation, and "*strive* to enter in at the straight

gate.”—Luke xiii: 24. All of the exhortations, entreaties and pleadings of the gospel, urged by the infinite love of God through Christ, and the exceedingly great and vast motives in favor of righteousness, were designed to move the heart, and encourage the sinner to come to Jesus on the terms consecrated by the suffering of a bleeding Saviour. Hence, every view of the dealings of God with man, and every doctrine that would discourage the sinner from taking hold of Jesus by the gospel, is not of God, but is of Satan. The spirit of Jesus is, *come to me*. The spirit of Satan, do not have Christ to reign over you. The spirit of Christ, “believe in me;” that of Satan, you can not believe. The spirit of Jesus, they “that hear and do the will” of God are wise; they who are “doers of the work” shall be blessed; but the spirit of Satan, you can not do anything acceptable to the Lord; you have not ability to perform acceptable service. The spirit of salvation cries in the person of Jesus, “What *more* could I do for my vineyard, that I have not done? The spirit of sin under Satan, says you must wait for Jesus to *do more*; wait till, in some mystical way, he enables you to obey the call. Thus the two spirits are contrary the one to the other; and, if a man is not led by the spirit of righteousness, he is led captive by Satan at his will in the spirit of disobedience. There is no middle ground. And no true ambassa-

dor of Jesus, ever preached to the sinner the discouraging, nullifying dogma, you can not believe or do what Jesus requires.

4. But here comes an objector with the discouraging dogma, the sinner has no power to believe, be-  
 cause faith is a *direct gift* of God. Now, let me remind you that *direct gifts* of God are no part of your duty; they are on the part of the Lord. We should have confidence in Him that he will do his work all right. "He who has promised is faithful." "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." You are not responsible for the Lord's part in salvation. There *is* a faith, however, for which *you* are responsible, without which you will be condemned. It is, too, the gift of God, as "every good gift comes from the Father of lights," but not a *direct* gift. It comes through testimony. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." "These are written that ye might believe." "I pray for them that believe through their word." *This* is the faith for which *you* are responsible. God has given the testimony concerning his Son that you *might* believe, saying to you, "This is my Son, the beloved, *hear ye him.*" You are required to give the testimony that God has given concerning his Son Jesus, its proper bearing upon your heart, "that believing ye might have life through his name." "Every one that hears and learns of the Father," said Jesus, "cometh unto me."—Jno. vi: 45. You must *hear* and

learn of the Father in order to faith, for it pleased God in this way to give you faith. You are responsible for this faith, because God has given you the testimony, "line upon line," etc. "It pleased God, by the foolishness of *preaching*, to save men." Then hear, and learn, and perform your duty to Christ, believing that he is faithful to perform his part in blessing.

5. The Lord first created the material things by direct power, but now he creates by regularly established laws in nature. So the Lord first set up his new creation, the plan of salvation, by direct inspiration, but since that, he works by established regulations. The first apple tree was by direct creation, but now, if we want a tree, we must obtain it according to established laws in nature. So the first Christian graces were given by *direct* interposition, but now we obtain them according to the established *laws* of grace. As in nature every tree must come from a seed of its kind, so in grace every renewed heart must come by means of the seed, the Word of God; for the Word of God is the *seed* of the kingdom; (Luke viii: 11.) "The gospel is *the power* of God unto salvation." It would be foolish in me to expect God to give me an apple



tree now by direct creation, and just as foolish for any one to expect the Lord to save him now by direct inspiration. We must commence with the *seed*, the Word of God, and cultivate according to the established terms. O, how many misguided souls linger in disobedience, expecting some *special* interposition!

6. Others excuse themselves on account of the many doctrines, and the confusion in Christendom. They reason that, as they can not know which sect or doctrine is right, they will stand aloof from all. Now, we would say to such, the Lord does not require of you the task of deciding as to the validity of any of those sects or doctrines of men. The Lord does not make it your duty to decide as to the proper claims of Presbyterianism, Methodism, Baptism, Campbellism, or any other ism or sect. "Who hath required this at thy hands?" But he *does* require you to decide as to the claims of Christ: "What think ye of Jesus?" Is *he* the Son of God, the authority of the heavens? And are his apostles the ambassadors, properly authorized to set forth his claims and terms of reconciliation? You should not cheat yourself out of salvation in perplexing yourself with things not pertaining to your



duty. True Christianity is as far above humanisms and doctrines of men as heaven is above earth. "This is my Son, the beloved, *hear ye him*," is the command of God to you. Do this: take Jesus as your Lord and ruler, head over all things to the church, and live for him independent of all else, and then you are *safe*. In him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," all you really need. "All the fulness of the Godhead" is embodied in him, "who is the head of all principalities and powers." And "you are complete in him," without human appendages or any isms of the day. Then "beware, lest any man beguile you of your reward" by turning you from your obligations to Jesus Christ to serving "doctrines and commandments of men."—Col. ii: 8-22.

7. In view of the love of God in Christ, the incalculably high, deep, wide, vast and precious motives the Spirit sets before you in the gospel, and your eternal interest, we exhort you to not neglect your return to the Lord. "If you hear his voice, (the gospel is his voice to you,) harden not your hearts." The Lord invites you so lovingly to come, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall

find rest to your souls." "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near." "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit, for why will you die, says the Lord."

THE END.













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